

ACANTHOMYS LEUCOPUS GRAY 1867 (MAMMALIA): PROPOSED
VALIDATION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS. Z.N.(S.) 1724

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In our revisionary studies of the Australian species of the genus *Rattus* we have found that the name in universal use as the specific name of one form is an invalid junior secondary homonym and that the next available name has not been used as a senior synonym for 43 years. We believe that the stability and universality of nomenclature would best be served by conserving the invalid name and we request action by the Commission in this case. The facts are as follows:

2. In 1867 Gray (*Proc. zool. Soc. London* 1867 : 598) described a rat from Cape York, Australia, under the name *Acanthomys leucopus*. Alston (*Proc. zool. Soc. London* 1877 : 124) pointed out that Gray's species was misplaced generically and transferred it to *Mus*, the generic name then in common use for many kinds of rats; he also pointed out that the specific name *leucopus* in the new combination was preoccupied by *Mus leucopus*, an unrelated North American rodent described in 1818 as *Musculus leucopus* (Rafinesque, *Amer. monthly Mag.* 3 : 446). In 1879 Alston (*Proc. zool. Soc. London* 1879 : 646) introduced *terraereginae* as a replacement name for *leucopus* Gray.

3. The species was known in the literature under the replacement name until 1920 when Thomas (*Ann. Mag. nat. Hist.* (9) 6 : 424) "reinstated" *leucopus* Gray as a valid name when he removed it to *Rattus*. Since *leucopus* Rafinesque had been transferred to *Peromyscus* there was no longer any confusion, according to Thomas. The last use of *terraereginae* as a senior synonym, albeit an incidental one, appears to be that of Wood Jones in 1922 (*Proc. zool. Soc. London* 1922 : 594), and the last listing of the name as a senior synonym in a checklist or monographic work was in 1916 (Longman, *Mem. Qd. Mus.* 5 : 30).

4. Since 1920 all authors except Wood Jones have used the specific name *leucopus* Gray. Included among their publications are the only three monographs in which this species and related forms are reviewed (Rümmler, 1938, *Mitt. zool. Mus. Berlin* 23 : 182; Ellerman, 1941, 1949, *Families and Genera of Living Rodents*, vols. 2 and 3, London; Tate, 1951, *Bull. Amer. Mus. nat. Hist.* 97 art. 4), the current checklist of Australian mammals (Iredale and Troughton, 1934, *Mem. Aust. Mus.* no. 6), and the two regional works on mammals in general use (Le Souef and Burrell, 1926, *Wild Animals of Australasia*, London; Troughton, *Furred Animals of Australia*, 1941 and subsequent editions, Sydney).

Although seven years must elapse before the valid name *terraereginae* becomes a nomen oblitum, we consider that it would be more in keeping with the spirit of the Code to preserve current usage, and we therefore ask the Commission to:

- (1) rule under the plenary powers that the specific name *Acanthomys leucopus* Gray, 1867, is not permanently invalidated by its senior secondary homonym *Musculus leucopus* Rafinesque, 1818;
- (2) place the specific name *leucopus* Gray, 1867, as published in the binomen *Acanthomys leucopus*, on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.